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INFORMATION ON YANG-TE RR LINE AND HARBIN RR SHOPS

Chung-kuo Ching-chi-ti Kai-tsao  
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[Summary: The railway line from Yang-ch'uan in Shansi Province to Te-hsien in Shantung Province, 454 kilometers long, was restored in 1949 and trains began operation immediately. Of 71 workmen in the Harbin Railway machine shop, 59 earned bonuses during February 1949. Fifty-seven newly trained cadres were sent to Mukden and Kirin, to the Army Engineering Corps, and to the Northeast Railway Labor Union.]

Trains in Operation on Yang-te Line

(Hsin-hua She) 3 December 1948 -- The line from Yang-ch'uan [113 36, 37 50], Shansi, running through Shih-chia-chuang to Te-hsien, Shantung, is now fully restored and trains are in operation. Over 100 comparatively large bridges and 454 kilometers of track were restored.

During the Sino-Japanese hostilities, 1937-1945, and the post war liberation struggle, it was necessary to demolish many kilometers of the Peiping--Hankow, Shih-chia-chuang--T'ai-yuan, and Shih-chia-chuang--Te-hsien railway lines. Rails were torn up and buried, ties were burned or used for building material. Much of the roadbed was put back under cultivation, and bridge piers were upset into the rivers. This temporary destruction was a prerequisite to victory and a permanent reconstruction. After liberation, the restoration of the railways was given top priority, and the people immediately responded, digging up buried rails, regrading the roadbed, and chopping down precious trees to provide ties. On the Yang-ch'uan section of the line there were many dangerous places, where under the French, the Japanese, and the Nationalists, the lives of many laborers were lost; but in this reconstruction under the people's government there was no loss of life.

In the course of reconstruction, the policy was followed of putting the line into commercial operation as far and as fast as the work was completed. The commercial use of a portion of the rebuilt line commenced 2 February 1948; trains could run over the whole line by 7 July 1948. For the past 9 months the revenue from the use of the completed portion has been used to pay the wages of the laborers at work on the uncompleted portion. Beginning in June, the line was self-supporting. In September, a conference of stationmasters was held which resulted in great improvement in service.

Experiences With Bonus System at Harbin Shops

(Hsin-hua She) 7 January 1949 -- Since 1 February 1948, the machine shop of the Harbin Railway Shops has been giving workers an award or bonus for exceeding work quotas and has gained certain experiences and results.

Of the 71 workmen working under the experimental application of this bonus system from 1-13 February, 59 earned a bonus. During this period, these men put in 579.5 hours of overtime work, which was about 10 percent of the total time worked by the group. One man worked 50 hours overtime; two others each worked 30 hours of overtime. With regard to improved performance, a task for which 50 minutes was allowed ordinarily was accomplished in 19 minutes; this is an instance in which the quota was exceeded by 163 percent. In another case, a 22-minute job was completed in 10 minutes. Two men each worked an average of 2 hours overtime per day during the 13 day period.

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No deterioration in the quality of the work was detected because the workmen knew that if the work was not up to standard it would not be accepted and would have to be done over again. The men took even better care of their tools and machines, and they offered more suggestions for improvements and savings in methods. The spirit of the workers in general was much improved.

Twenty-eight men, or 39 percent of the working force, used 85 hours in excess of the allotted time, but this was only 1.5 percent of the whole working period. Causes of this excess included:

1. The standard time allotted for certain jobs was so short it was impossible for some of the workmen to finish the tasks within the allotted time.
2. The workmen were careless and had to do the work over again.
3. Misunderstanding on the part of some of the men as to the motive behind the offering of bonuses. Some men believed the bonus was a scheme on the part of the management to find out to what extent work would be speeded up, preparatory to reducing the standard time allotted for the respective jobs, and they felt this was not to their advantage, hence they did not exert themselves. The foremen have actively tried to erase this mistaken idea, explaining that what is good for the country, of which they the people are the proprietors, is good for them individually. The foremen have pointed out that increases in wages and better living conditions depend on constant improvement in production efficiency.

From the experience gained in this experiment with work bonuses, the following lessons have been learned:

1. Before the inauguration of the bonus system, the standard working time to be allowed for each particular job must be determined carefully, accurately, and fairly. The time should not be too high or too low, but should be right for the average workman. In the beginning, it is better to be too liberal in the time allotted than to not be liberal enough. If a minority of the workmen earn bonuses, the standard time allotted should not be reduced immediately; a change should not be considered or made until a majority are exceeding the quota and the proposed change has been discussed with the workers. Then the management should make and announce the decision. A sudden individual change should be made only under special circumstances, such as when new machines, new tools, or new processes are introduced, and the workmen affected should agree that a reduction in the allotted time is justifiable.
2. It is advisable, as far as possible, to adjust the organization of the work so that certain machines and tools are regularly assigned to certain workmen, and to adopt reasonable procedures.
3. An adequate supply of materials on which work is to be done, and tools for the task, should always be available so as not to hinder the workers from accomplishing their maximum output.
4. The party and the labor unions should make an effective arrangement concerning their respective functions and authority, so that the provisions of the bonus plan may operate smoothly and its objectives be achieved. The management should consult with the party and labor union cadres and rely on their aid in the solution of problems pertaining to the workers, and not attempt to make and enforce independent decisions.
5. The management should set up an efficiency section whose functions are to specialize in setting up work quotas and fixing the time standards for jobs.

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Training of Cadres in Harbin Shops

(Hsin-hua She) 7 December 1948 -- In the 2 years of operation under the direction of the Central People's Government, the Harbin Railway Shops have trained 47 department heads or chiefs of sections, several tens of foremen, and 21 secretaries of branch party organizations or executives of main or branch labor unions. To meet outside needs, 57 newly trained cadres have been sent out to Mukden and Kirin, to the Army Engineering Corps, to the Northeast Railway Labor Union and even to the Ministry of Railways and to the Committee of Finance and Economics of the Government Administration Council. Although many of the old and experienced cadres sent to Harbin by the government have been transferred to other places, their places have been filled by new trainees and the work of the shops has expanded and improved.

Within the next 1-2 months, it is planned to complete the training of a number of trainees, or deputies, of chiefs of shops, departments, and sections, and to train the cadres that will be needed for the Committee of the Assembly Shop. Twenty new trainees are to be picked out for assignment elsewhere by the Department of Railways. The training of cadres was accomplished through the use of these four procedures:

1. Re-education and rejuvenation, ideologically and technologically, of older technicians, superintendents, and foremen.
2. Selection for special attention and training of staff members and workers who are most active and keen in matters of production.
3. Promotion to greater responsibility of those who possess ability following suitable education and training.
4. Cultivation of promising cadres through appointment as deputies or trainees to chiefs of units whereby practical experience may be gained.

The older and more competent foremen and workers constantly guide and train the younger cadres in setting up work plans, in constructively critical examination of work in progress, and in the discussion of technological and ideological ideas. The supervisors use all kinds of conferences, classes, and private studies for the instruction of the cadres. They bring to the attention of the cadres all decisions made by higher party echelons and editorials in the Mukden Tung-pei Jih-pao, and arranged organized discussion of these matters to raise the level of the cadres' political knowledge. At present, the thinking of the cadres is directed to the question of how to conduct the work of the shops in a more scientific and businesslike manner.

In this factory, besides the older and more experienced cadres assigned here by the Ministry of Railways some of whom are getting old and set in their ways, it is important to have new blood to infuse new ideas and vigor in production and in the training of young cadres. Such men as Chou Wen-k wei, who not only has the ability to take the lead in production, but who has made railway construction his life work, are needed.

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The weakness of the cadres' training program is that it is too stereotyped; it lacks arrangements for developing the talents of different men by various courses and methods fitted to their particular inclinations and potentialities. Not all of the sections of the shops have instituted the trainee system, and not enough evening technical classes have been organized to provide for all those desiring and eligible to enter. The training of foremen is inadequate. Efforts are now being made to remedy these deficiencies.

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